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Hamtramck, Mich., March 24.

WW PHOTO: ALAN POLLOCK

April 16 mortgage protest set:

Bail out people not bankers!

By Monica Moorehead

When the Mortgage Bankers Association meets in Washington, D.C., on April 16-17 at the swanky Washington Court Hotel, their gathering will draw protesters. The MBA is a national lobbying group that represents the interests of the banks, including lending firms that are directly responsible for the evictions of tens of thousands of people, including both buyers and renters, from their foreclosed homes.

The MBA plans to hold its sessions behind closed doors in order to map out policies of protecting the banks' profits and their predatory lending policies. They also plan to reach out to members of Congress.

An Ad Hoc Committee to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions has called an emergency demonstration at the MBA meeting to demand a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions to take place immediately. The main slogan of this committee is, "Bail out people before bankers!"

Part of the call to action by the Ad Hoc Committee states: "Whether it's rising gas and food prices; the lack of health care; losing our jobs; having our wages cut; sinking further into credit card, student loan or medical debt; or budget cuts; or the destruction of public housing; or ending this war that is costing lives and almost a half a billion dollars a day—surviving hard times is going to require that we stick together and organize."

The organizers say the main goal of this demonstration is to help spark a united national fightback movement of those of all ages, nationalities and social backgrounds, who are directly and indirectly impacted by this growing economic crisis.

Why the time has come for a national fightback

The subprime loan scandal that began to rock the housing market last year continues to further weaken an already shaky capitalist economy to its very core. All of the sugar coated, fancy terms of the bourgeois economists and "experts" cannot hide the undeniable fact that the larger part of the worldwide economy—with its epicenter in Wall Street—is in a full-blown recession with no foreseeable end in sight.

There isn't a day that goes by when there aren't major articles on the front pages of papers, large and small, on how the collapsing housing market is catalyst for ever deeper suffering and

hardships in individual neighborhoods, cities, rural areas and states.

Subprime lenders are nothing more than profit-hungry conglomerations that prey on those who have little to no credit—particularly struggling single mothers who are Black or Latin@. These companies offer mortgages that look like a good deal on the surface but which turn out to be rife with excessive fees, high penalties for refinancing and other hidden costs. What was once considered a hallmark of "the American dream"—"owning" a home—has been transformed into "an American nightmare."

Just how widespread is this housing crisis? According to the Center for Responsible Lending, a nonprofit organization, 7.2 million families live in homes with a subprime mortgage. Families with a subprime loan approved in 1998 through 2006 who have lost or will lose their home to foreclosure in the next few years amount to an estimated 2.2 million.

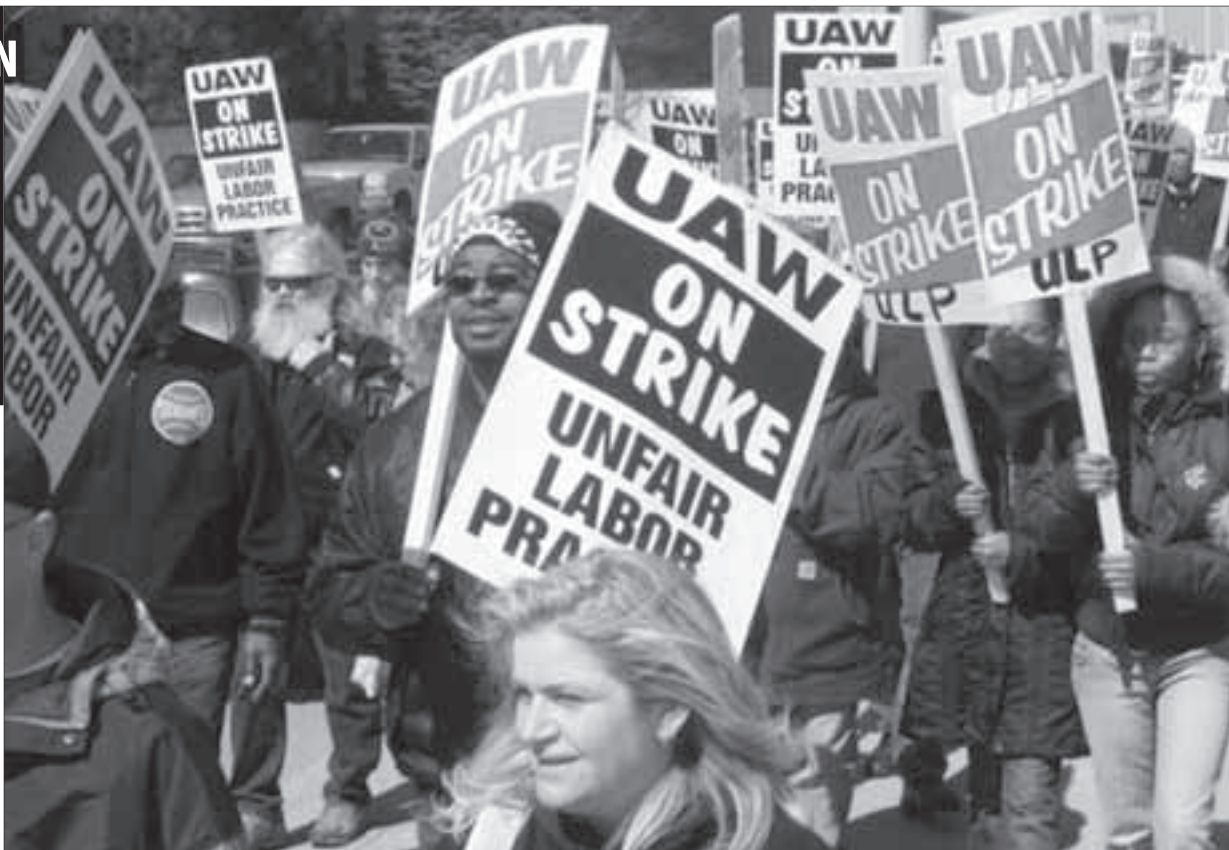
The dollar amount of subprime loans outstanding in 2007 was \$1.3 trillion compared to \$332 billion in 2003. The amount of increase over these four years alone has been 292 percent. One out of five of these subprime loans made in 2005-2006 is expected to default. (www.responsiblelending.org) And these figures are just the tip of the iceberg.

Some newspapers have reported that a small but nonetheless growing number of those who are being threatened with foreclosure have taken desperate measures such as carrying out arson in hopes of collecting insurance.

"The FBI reports grew 4 percent in suburbs and 2.2 percent in cities from 2005 to 2006. ... In California, a state hit particularly hard by foreclosures, insurance companies must tell the state within 60 days if they suspect a fire is 'questionable.' Last year, more than 120 reports were filed, and in 14, foreclosure was named a possible factor.

"The previous year, just 70 reports were filed, with seven citing foreclosure, says the state insurance commissioner's office. ... Arrest warrants for arson in Detroit rose 89 percent between 2005 and 2007. 'We are up to our eyeballs in arsons,' says Steve Varnas, of the Detroit Fire Department. 'We're not only dealing with hardened criminals. We're dealing with desperate people.'" (Los Angeles Times, Jan. 28, 2008)

Go to www.StopForeclosuresandEvictions.org to endorse, volunteer or donate to this important demonstration. □



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Pomo Indians win, change mascot's name

By Terri Kay
Kelseyville, Calif.

The Pomo Nation in Lake County, Calif., has overcome a racist campaign mounted in the Kelseyville school district to overturn the righteous renaming of the Kelseyville High School mascot from “the Indians” to “the Knights.” At a Kelseyville H.S. school board meeting, attended by more than 100 people on both sides of the issue, the board voted 4-1 not to return to the Indian mascot name.

About 40 people spoke at this meeting, about two-thirds of them in support of the Pomo Nation. At the previous board meeting, with 350 in attendance, speakers were more evenly divided. Heavy discussion in online and print media between the two meetings showed the support for the racist initiative fading.

In response to a proposal by one of the racists for “a compromise,” dropping the mascot caricature but keeping the Indian name, Lisa Mammina, from Ukiah, added a touch of humor by saying she was confused about who were Indians and who were not. Pointing to those seated on the left, many wearing sweatshirts claiming “Always an Indian,” she said, “I think it’s really cool they (pointing to the Pomo people on the right) are not asking for their land back. All they’re asking for is their name back.”

“Are we going to teach our kids, ‘We’re going to use your name and we don’t give a darn whether you like it?’ That’s not right,” said a 1945 Kelseyville H.S. grad, Bob Prather.

“As a Native American, I am saying that it’s not OK, it’s not for sale, and it’s definitely not to be used,” said Tera Duncan.

Native Adrien Malicay said, “Just let it go. It doesn’t belong to you. Call yourselves ‘the Americans.’ Aren’t you proud of that?”



The name change was originally won only a couple of years ago, at the instigation of Clayton Duncan, a local Pomo. He brought letters from the five local tribal councils to the previous school board. Duncan was able to win enough support so that the mascot name was unanimously changed by the school board from “the Indians” to “the Knights.” Since then there has been a school board election campaign, with those supporting the racist initiative running candidates to get the change overturned.

The Pomos are also mounting a campaign to change the name of the town of Kelseyville, which is named after one of the settlers who was responsible for the enslavement, starvation and murder of many Pomos. His name is a constant reminder of the bloody history of slavery and massacres which were carried out against the Pomo and other Native nations by the white settlers.

They are also trying to get support for the promotion and distribution of a very moving documentary entitled “Hinthel Ganula.” This movie, which was produced locally, documents the struggles for survival of the Pomo people in northern California, focused in the region now called Lake County.

Clayton Duncan’s great-grandmother was one of the lone survivors of a particularly heinous event, “the Bloody Island Massacre.” During this criminal atrocity she hid in the shallow waters of the lake, breathing through the tulles. Still clutched by her dead mother, she watched the white soldiers murder every man, woman and child on the island. □



American Axle striker on Detroit picket line.

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Vol. 50, No. 13 • April 3, 2008
Closing date: March 26, 2008

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; foreign and institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at www.workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.



Housing crisis at historic level

By Jaimeson Champion

The drastic rise in mortgage foreclosures, which began more than a year ago, coupled with the decades-long attacks on affordable housing for renters, has resulted in a housing crisis in the U.S. today that is of historic proportions.

In some areas particularly hard hit by foreclosures and the lack of affordable rental properties, tent cities reminiscent of the 1930s' Hoovervilles are beginning to swell in size.

A man from California recently interviewed by the British Broadcasting Company explained that after struggling to keep up with rising mortgage payments he was eventually faced with a choice no worker should ever be forced to make.

"It came down to feeding my family or keeping the house," he said, "so I got rid of the house." (BBC, March 14)

This man and his family are now living in a growing tent city in Ontario, Calif., just outside of Los Angeles. The tent city has more than quadrupled in size since last summer and is now populated by more than 200 men, women and children.

Some of the newly arriving residents at the tent city are homeless as a direct result of being ensnared in predatory subprime mortgage loans, but many are also living there because they are victims of the intensifying layoffs and wage cuts being perpetrated by the bosses across all sectors of the U.S. economy.

Faced with job loss and wage cuts at the same time that mortgage, rent, food and energy costs are all going up, an ever increasing number of workers across the country are being forced into homelessness.

The pain of the housing crisis is being felt most acutely in the most oppressed communities.

Mortgage crisis costs \$213 billion for people of color

A recent study titled "State of the Dream 2008," released by United for a

Fair Economy, puts the monetary cost of the subprime mortgage crisis for people of color in the U.S. at \$213 billion.

Brenda Cotto-Escalera, co-executive director of UFE and one of the authors of the report, said, "As a result of cold-blooded targeting of people of color and low-income people in general by the subprime mortgage industry, communities across the nation are being torn apart." The study concludes that, "The subprime lending debacle has caused the largest loss of wealth to people of color in modern U.S. history."

For many communities of color, the drastic rise in foreclosures is just the latest in a long list of attacks on community housing stock. Intensifying gentrification and the wholesale destruction of public housing, as are currently taking place in New Orleans, are also contributing to the rapid disappearance of affordable housing in cities across the country.

Perhaps nothing is more emblematic of the vilely predatory nature of the mortgage lenders than the targeting of immigrant communities during the housing bubble. Subprime mortgage loans were deliberately marketed to immigrant communities where English was not the primary language.

In many Latin@ communities, mortgage loans were marketed in Spanish in television and radio ads, but the financial documentation detailing the terms of the loan was written in English. These financial documents were deliberately designed to disguise exploding interest rates and confuse the borrower as to the actual terms of the loan.

Housing crisis demands fightback

The mortgage lenders had no incentive to ensure that borrowers could repay these predatory loans because they quickly sold them off at a profit to larger financial institutions on Wall Street. Wall Street then pooled all these mortgage loans and many other types of loans, repackaged them as securities and derivatives, and sold them off at a profit to investors in the

U.S. and around the globe. This created a giant financial house of cards, or "shadow banking system," that has been collapsing in tandem with the U.S. housing market since last summer.

The experience of Glenda Ortiz, a Honduran immigrant profiled in a recent Washington Post article, is similar to that of thousands of immigrants around the country who were targeted by subprime lenders.

In 2005, Mrs. Ortiz was given a subprime mortgage loan, with terms which were not fully explained to her, to purchase a home in Alexandria, Va. When her mortgage payments soared to \$3,000 a month, which was more than 70 percent of her and her husband's combined monthly incomes of \$4,200, she quickly began to fall behind. In 2007 Ortiz was forced into bankruptcy and foreclosure.

Her home was repossessed by the bank. She said, "My house, my dream, it was an illusion." (Washington Post, March 22).

The deepening housing crisis is a crime perpetrated against the workers by the capitalists. The Wall Street tycoons are being bailed out with hundreds of billions of dollars from the Federal Reserve, but there has yet to be any substantial relief for the millions of workers who are losing their homes.

This crisis of historic proportions demands a militant fightback that is equally epic in size. Grassroots people's struggles against the mortgage lenders, bankers and bosses, such as those being waged by organizations like MECAWI in Detroit, can and must be replicated in cities and towns across the country. The capitalist bankers and bosses are pushing us from our homes. We must push back. □

MICHIGAN Activists accuse HUD over foreclosures



WWW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Organizers with the Michigan campaign for a moratorium on foreclosures, evictions and utility shut-offs demonstrated on March 20 at the McNamara Federal Building in downtown Detroit. The campaign, a struggle project of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice (MECAWI), has been pressuring Gov. Jennifer Granholm to declare a state of economic emergency and impose a moratorium on home foreclosures. Michigan ranks among the worst states for the numbers of workers losing their homes due to racist, sexist subprime mortgages.

But this time, activists had another target—the Department of Housing and Urban Development. According to MECAWI literature: "The U.S. government through HUD is bailing out the banks and lending institutions by paying off loans on foreclosed homes, and then forcing the occupants onto the street. Everyone knows that these homes will immediately be vandalized and stripped. Why is the government making people homeless and destroying neighborhoods?"

"HUD's own rules call for a mandatory moratorium on foreclosures when the federal government declares a state of disaster. Michigan is in a state of economic disaster. We are in a state of emergency. Whole neighborhoods are being destroyed as homes are abandoned after foreclosure by the banks. Detroit's neighborhoods look just like the Ninth Ward

in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina hit. HUD imposed a moratorium on foreclosures in response to that disaster. We demand the federal government impose a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions on all HUD properties in our state."

MECAWI leader Jerry Goldberg told Workers World: "In Detroit alone over 10,000 foreclosures are the results of defaults on FHA [Federal Housing Authority] loans. While the federal government doesn't think twice about bailing out the big investment banks like Bear Stearns, that have caused this crisis for poor and working people, it also doesn't hesitate to throw the poorest families out onto the streets. This government complicity in the subprime mortgage crisis is criminal. HUD is supposed to stand for housing and urban development, not homelessness and urban destruction. We demand a national moratorium on foreclosures and evictions to stop this crisis and give desperately needed relief to the people."

MECAWI has reserved a bus to go to Washington, D.C., for the April 16 demonstration outside the Mortgage Bankers Association conference, called by the newly formed Ad Hoc National Network to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions. Organizers will bring foreclosure victims and members of devastated communities to Washington to put a human face on the widespread crisis caused by the bankers.

For transportation information and to get involved in this struggle, contact MECAWI at moratorium@sbglobal.net or call 313-319-0870. □



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'Keep fighting'

Solidarity with American Axle strikers grows

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Buffalo, N.Y., and Detroit

Solidarity is growing rapidly across the U.S. and beyond for the workers at American Axle, on strike at five plants in Michigan and New York.

About 3,600 workers at the plants walked out Feb. 26 against the company's intentions to cut their pay in half, replace their pensions with a 401-k, increase health care benefit costs, and demand other outrageous concessions that are an affront to the dignity and respect of workers everywhere.

The workers now make on average about \$50,000 annually—before taxes—as compared to the \$10.2 million in total compensation that American Axle President Dick Dauch ripped off from the workers in 2007. Dauch is also a former chairperson of the National Association of Manufacturers. Other American Axle company executives also make millions off the backs of the workers.

The UAW went on strike charging an unfair labor practice because of the company's refusal to open its books for bargaining purposes. American Axle is a parts maker spun off by General Motors in 1994. More than 40,000 workers at 30 GM production plants and suppliers in the U.S. and Canada are now idled.

The union—and community—make us strong!

On March 24, as the strike completed its fourth week, Local 235 and Local 262



WW PHOTO: ALAN POLLOCK

sponsored a spirited rally and march in Hamtramck, Mich., site of American Axle's largest production plant, where 1,900 workers labor. The two locals represent about 2,200 workers in Detroit, which surrounds the municipality of Hamtramck. The day's events were also co-sponsored by Local 412, an amalgamated local that represents more than 5,000 union members in the Metro Detroit region.

Over 20 UAW locals from throughout Metro Detroit and Michigan, representing workers in many industries, sectors and plants, including Delphi, Dana, GM, Ford and Chrysler, came out in the hundreds to support their sisters, brothers and loved ones at American Axle. Other unions and community organizations also attended, including the Green Party, the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice (MECAWI), the AFT, the Machinists and the Electrical Workers.

Dave Sole, president of UAW Local

2334, and Alan Pollock of MECAWI told Workers World about a diverse multinational rally at the local union hall, where a DJ spun and a barbecue took place, followed by a spirited march of hundreds of workers around the massive Hamtramck plant. The marchers stopped at several picket lines for speak-outs and then gathered in formation on both sides of American Axle world headquarters, singing and chanting slogans such as, "We are the union, the mighty, mighty union."

During the march a truck driver attempting to enter the plant threatened picketers with serious bodily harm while trying to drive through a moving picket line. Instead of arresting the driver, cops threatened the workers with arrest if they didn't allow the truck through, which eventually happened.

Despite this, the workers' mood was high. They entered their fifth week on strike March 25 vowing to fight on and win.

'We've gotta keep fighting'

Terry Hannon, a member of the International Action Center—Buffalo and a retired Teamster who worked for the Buffalo News as a driver and helper for 33 years, was on the Tonawanda, N.Y., picket line March 23. He has also participated in the UAW Local 846 picket line in Cheektowaga, another industrial suburb of Buffalo.

"I think it's absolutely imperative that working people realize what's happening in this country. The bosses are destroying our livelihoods, our jobs, and we have reached a point where we have to change our way of thinking and our tactics as far as dealing with this very, very big problem. And as a union worker and a worker for many years, I just feel we have to get out there and support these auto workers. It's absolutely necessary," Hannon told WW.

Caleb T. Maupin, a sophomore at Baldwin-Wallace College near Cleveland and a member of the youth organization Fight Imperialism-Stand Together (FIST), joined Hannon at the Tonawanda line.

"Even though I'm a young person, even though I'm of Irish heritage, even though I may be queer, I'm still a worker. And that's the primary contradiction in society today—between the workers and the bosses. I am a member of the working class. When my working-class brothers and sisters are out on the picket line, I stand and support them because we're on their side in the struggle that's going on. We're going to be on their side until we win," Maupin told WW.

Maupin added, "If this strike is won, it will strengthen the unions and open up all kinds of possibilities for my generation because the unions have always been first in the fight for things like student aid, which allows a lot of young people to attend schools, and for better education. If the working class was strong enough we could actually stop this bosses' war that's being waged in Iraq. But if the strike didn't succeed, it would crush a lot of people's desire to fight back. So that's why we've gotta keep fighting."

WW also spoke to Patrick McCarthy, vice-president of Local 846, which represents about 600 workers at the Cheektowaga machining and Tonawanda forge plants, and Marty Kuntz, the local's financial secretary. They said the local receives daily phone calls, donations and provisions from across the country. Every day numerous union members from Metro Buffalo and beyond join their picket lines. Local 846 also has a strike support website, www.uawaam.com.

UAW Local 424 represents workers in Buffalo, N.Y., at a plant that was shut down in December 2007, before the strike. All five plants on strike are governed by a UAW master agreement with American Axle.

During week four of the strike, donations, support resolutions and provisions continue to pour into the locals. UAW members in Toledo, Ohio, brought trucks of canned goods to Detroit. Other regional union caravans are planned. The Graduate Employee Organization—AFT, in the midst of planning its own walkout, sent a support resolution and \$500 to Local 235. In Three Rivers, Mich., where about 800 members are on strike, the local union hall is packed with provisions donated from the community. All the picket lines are joined by labor and community organizations; some have set aside specific times and days for their members to participate.

Internationally, union and other progressive Web sites and blogs in the U.S., Canada, Europe and elsewhere post frequent updates on the American Axle strike.

Send donations and support resolutions to UAW Local 235, 2140 Holbrook Ave., Hamtramck, MI 48212; 313-871-1190; adrianrking@hotmail.com or billalford74@yahoo.com

Allan Pollock, Mike Shane and Dave Sole in Detroit; Caleb T. Maupin from Cleveland; and Terry Hannon from Buffalo contributed to this report.

STOP THE RAIDS & DEPORTATIONS *Legalization Now•Justice for ALL*

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May Day 2008 is critically important. Will the optimism and hope expressed around the Presidential elections translate into an end of immigrant raids & deportations? Will it bring an end to the foreclosures of homes, the lowering of gas and food prices, or an end to lay-offs?

Whatever the outcome in November, the May 1st Coalition for Immigrant and Worker Rights will be marching once again on May Day, International Workers Day, to say no to all the attacks against workers here and around the world.

We call on the progressive community, the anti-war movement, the women's & LGBT movement, and especially on the labor movement, to come out for May Day 2008. March for solidarity, because an injury to one is an injury to all!

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WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH

1930s: The women were fearless

By Martha Grevatt

The 1930s were years of fierce class struggle and great advances for the working class. Probably no decade before or since has witnessed such an expansion of labor’s influence and strength in the U.S.

From the beginning, women were deeply involved in these struggles. As the decade opened in the midst of the Great Depression, Unemployed Councils brought working-class men and women together. The National Unemployed Council, with chapters in scores of cities and towns and all but four states, successfully fought evictions and utility shutoffs.

Paralleling unemployed organizing was the growth of the militant, communist-led Housewives’ Leagues. According to the Web site of the National Women’s History Museum:

“The Detroit Housewives’ League took on the meatpacking industry itself. In 1935, the group burned a huge packing-house in protest of high prices, and they joined thousands of Chicago housewives in a march that shut down that city’s entire meat industry. The Detroit black women’s Housewives’ League was founded in 1930 by Fannie Peck, and by 1935, the League had over 10,000 members. Nationwide, these Leagues created 75,000 jobs for African Americans, overcoming racial discrimination and ameliorating some of the devastating effects of the Depression.” (www.nwhm.org)

In 1937, while great struggles were already in motion, the historic victory of the Flint sit-down strike emboldened the whole working class to take things further. The first big sit-down of a mainly female workforce involved cigar work-

ers in Detroit. There were 4,000 women, most of them Polish, working in six shops. Their grievances—confirmed by a fact-finding commission—included working six and seven days a week for a pittance, poor ventilation causing women to faint, and inadequate toilet facilities.

Management had told workers at Bernard Schwartz, makers of R.G. Dunn cigars, to form a committee to present their concerns. On Jan. 7, 1937, Schwartz fired the entire committee. By Feb. 16 a sit-down was in progress. On Feb. 19, some 2,500 cigar rollers were sitting down.

Just as the Women’s Emergency Brigade in Flint had to win over irate wives, so too did the cigar strike have to deal with raging husbands, but the spouses came around. By March 5 strikers at two plants were leading a victory march of 1,000 people through the Polish community.

On March 20, however, Detroit Mayor Couzens launched a counterattack. Detroit’s police broke down the doors of the Bernard Schwartz plant, dragging the fighting women out by their arms, clothing and hair. Police beat sympathizers, even throwing a pregnant woman off her porch. Three days later, 200,000 people protested in Cadillac Square. Feeling labor’s outrage, Michigan Gov. Frank Murphy called the two sides together on April 22. The next day every cigar shop in Detroit had a union contract.

These women cigar workers had, meanwhile, inspired other women in Detroit. Women led takeovers at Ferry-Morse Seed and Yale and Towne Lock.

The retailer equivalent of Wal-Mart of those days was Woolworth’s. On Feb. 27, from a balcony of the Woolworth chain’s four-story establishment at

Woodward and Grand River, an organizer for the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) blew a whistle and yelled, “Strike! Strike!” Immediately, women servers stopped serving and cash registers went silent.

When the store manager pulled the workers into a huddle, his pleas that they end their strike were met with a resounding, “No!” The daring action made national news. Two days later a second Detroit store was taken, and HERE threatened to strike all 40 Woolworth’s in the area. After seven days inside, the youthful women had won raises, seniority rights, shorter hours, company-provided uniforms and future hiring through the union.

The fever spread, as department store workers throughout Detroit and across the country struck for and won union recognition. Now there was proof that service workers could wield the sit-down weapon as effectively as factory workers.

It was not only in the workplace that the sit-down became the weapon of choice. In many cities families on relief sat down in government offices to demand better treatment. In San Antonio they were led by the young Emma Tenayuca, described by Time magazine as “a slim, vivacious labor organizer with black eyes and a Red philosophy” known by “everyone in San Antonio as ‘La Pasionaria de Texas.’” Frequently jailed, Tenayuca led many labor struggles, including a strike at the Finck cigar factory. One key demand of her Workers Alliance was the right to strike without fear of deportation.

Tenayuca is best known for her leadership in the 1938 pecan shellers strike. San Antonio was the world pecan capital. Mexican women worked 70 hours a week



Emma Tenayuca

for as little as 30 cents a day picking nut meat from shells by hand. The 147 shops, where 12,000 workers produced 21 million pounds of shelled pecans per year, were closed by the strike.

One thousand strikers and supporters, including Tenayuca, were jailed. After thirty-seven days the owners agreed to arbitration. Tenayuca later said, “What started out as an organization for equal wages turned into a mass movement against starvation, for civil rights, for a minimum-wage law, and it changed the character of West Side San Antonio.”

By September 1937 the two-year-old Committee on Industrial Organization (CIO—later changed to Congress of Industrial Organizations), had more than 3.7 million members. Among them were half a million Black workers and hundreds of thousands of Asians and Latin@s. There were immigrants from all over—some 400,000 from Poland alone—and many, many women.

These women still inspire the women of their class seven decades later. As Workers World leader Teresa Gutierrez wrote in 1999 on the occasion of Tenayuca’s death, “Her image—striding in front of a line of marchers or standing at a microphone shaking her fist as she stirred the strikers to struggle on—inspires the oppressed workers of San Antonio to this day.” □

Raising the socialist banner for women’s rights

Excerpts from a speech by Sue Davis to Detroit Workers World commemoration of International Women’s Day.

International Women’s Day has a long, proud history. A demonstration in New York on March 8, 1908, of 15,000 women garment workers, mostly immigrants from Eastern Europe, Italy and Ireland, inspired socialist women to unanimously pass a resolution at the Second International Socialist Conference in 1910 establishing International Women’s Day.

Workers World Party made its own contribution to IWD 38 years ago. As the modern-day women’s movement was gathering steam in 1970, women in the party—mostly young women attracted to the anti-war, anti-racist, pro-liberation activism of WW’s youth group, Youth Against War & Fascism—were inspired to reclaim the socialist tradition of IWD. Due largely to the anti-communist McCarthy era, there hadn’t been a public commemoration of IWD in New York for at least 25 years.

The newly formed Women’s Caucus of YAWF called a rally in Union Square. We were thrilled when 1,000 women turned out to hear speakers talk about the need for universal childcare, to end racist oppression of Black women, the needs of working women for higher pay and more job opportunities, and the plight of women in prison. Maryann Weissman, a leader of YAWF who had just gotten out of jail for helping to organize anti-war GIs at Fort Sill, Okla., spoke about how women were in prison mostly for crimes of survival and called for the demonstration to march to the nearby Women’s House of Detention

to show solidarity with our most oppressed sisters in jail.

That rally and march turned out to be the first major demonstration of the women’s liberation movement in New York. At the time no other group in the city had the politics or the organizational experience to call such a large action. But none of us who organized the rally had a socialist understanding of women’s oppression. So for a month before and at least two years after, all the women gathered to study the origins of women’s oppression and how to fight it.

Dorothy Ballan, a founding member of WW and an organizer of women workers, wrote “*Feminism & Marxism*.” Ballan showed why patriarchy is not a god-given institution, how women’s oppression is rooted in private property and class oppression, and why it can and must be overthrown. She stressed a basic tenet of Marxism: fighting for women’s emancipation is an integral and essential part of the overall class struggle to end capitalist exploitation and all forms of racist, sexist and gender oppression.

One of the first things YAWF Women published was the brochure “Abortion and Class Society,” which affirmed that all women must have the right to abortion as part of the right to control their bodies. But we didn’t stop there; we asserted that working women, poor women, women of color needed to have social, economic and cultural supports to be able to raise healthy children, thus ensuring the real right to choose.

Eager to put that socialist perspective into practice, we became active in the

Committee to End Sterilization Abuse, founded by Dr. Helen Rodriguez Trias in 1972. This Puerto Rican pediatrician had become aware of the massive U.S. government plan to sterilize women in Puerto Rico. U.S. corporations setting up plants there wanted a low-cost, stable group of women workers to exploit.

Also around that time the sterilization of the Relf sisters, two Black teenagers on welfare in the South, became a national scandal. CESA’s research exposed a pattern of racist sterilization abuse that affected 35 percent of all women of child-bearing age in Puerto Rico, as well as 30 percent of Black women and 25 percent of Native American women in the U.S. CESA was able to win regulations, first in New York City in 1975 and then federal restrictions in 1979, that mandated informed consent so women could not easily be coerced into being sterilized against their will. However, we know that even today poor women can feel pressured to become sterilized because they don’t have the economic means to have more children.

When the Hyde Amendment became the law of the land in the summer of 1977, progressive women in New York, many of whom called themselves socialist feminists, organized a citywide meeting. Hyde was the first serious challenge to legal abortion, which became law in 1973. Hyde cut off funding for abortions for women on welfare—an outrageous attack on poor women, disproportionately women of color, who already had the least resources. A number of us who had worked in CESA were worried that poor women, denied access to abortion, would

be pressured into becoming sterilized. We struggled long and hard to educate others about the intersection of those issues. Eventually the group voted to call itself the Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse.

As we discussed the issues, the concept of reproductive rights came into being. We outlined the many prerequisites women need to be truly liberated: things like free, safe, accessible abortion regardless of age, race, economic status or class and no forced sterilization; safe contraception and comprehensive sex education; lesbian rights; freedom from racist oppression; the right to education, housing, food, jobs at livable wages, free childcare and medical care; freedom from sexual discrimination and harassment, incest, rape; and freedom from stereotypical gender roles. Similar meetings of progressive women were held all over the country, and the Reproductive Rights National Network (R2N2), made up of 80 regional groups, was founded in 1981. Since then, the concept of reproductive rights and the call for reproductive freedom have continued. More recently some women of color groups expanded on those demands and now call for reproductive justice.

Many of the women who founded the National Network for Abortion Funding, which raises funds to help poor women pay for abortions, were members of R2N2. So it’s no coincidence that NNAF started a campaign in 2007 to end the Hyde Amendment.

Sue Davis was one of the organizers of the 1970 International Women’s Day demonstration in New York City.

Workers World in 1968

State attacks on Black youth; countrywide rebellions

Workers World is in its 50th year of publication. Throughout the year, we will share with our readers some of the paper's content over the past half century. Below are excerpts from two articles in 1968—one on the racist murders of Black youth by the National Guard in Orangeburg, S.C.; another on the rebellions that followed the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

H. Rap Brown calls for mass action to avenge Orangeburg murders

Feb. 16, 1968

"If we seek redress of our grievances through peaceful, legal means, we will be shot down and murdered. It is obvious that the time for marching, demonstrating, demanding and praying is over."

So declared H. Rap Brown, chairman of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, in a prepared statement last week.

Mr. Brown was speaking in response to the murders and attempted general massacre of Black college students by the racist National Guard in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

While Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, called for "prompt and thorough investigation" of themselves by the racist authorities, Mr. Brown warned

the ruling class as follows:

"Let white America know that the name of the game is tit for tat, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life. ..."

Two 18-year-old South Carolina State College students and a 17-year-old high school lad had been shot and killed on Feb. 9 after three days of demonstrations, which were touched off by the illegal refusal of a white bowling alley proprietor to allow Black customers on the premises.

The Guardsmen, with bayonets fixed, attacked the young Black men, who naturally fought back, throwing small articles, according to some observers. The three who were killed, said a spokesman for the college, were "in a group which patrolmen were charging."

Ruling Class Talks 'Non-Violence' Sends 61,000 Troops in Reign of Terror

By Naomi Goldstein

April 11, 1968

Since the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King on April 4, every bourgeois politician from the racist Texan in the White House to the "liberal" mayor of New York City has called on the Black people to honor Dr. King by practicing his method of nonviolence.

"America is shocked and saddened by the brutal slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King. I ask every citizen to reject the blind violence that has struck Dr. King, who lived by nonviolence," President Johnson piously requested, just one day before calling in thousands of federal troops to terrorize the Black community in Washington, D.C.

The mournful words were hardly out of their mouths when the representatives of the racist ruling class called on National Guard units and federal troops to invade flaming ghettos in cities across the country, including Washington, Chicago, New York, Detroit, Memphis, Pittsburgh, Baltimore and many others.

While the warmongers in Washington were conveniently preaching nonviolence to the Black people, 110 cities exploded in rebellion against the oppressor's violence. By Monday evening 9,000 had been arrested and many more thousands wounded and beaten by the heavily armed troops.

In Washington, 4,000 Army and National Guard troops were called in to protect the White House and other government buildings. Flags flew at half staff and Congressmen eulogized the "man of peace" as combat troops set up machine gun posts on the steps of the Capitol building.

As the rebellion spread beyond the ghettos to within two blocks of the White House, Johnson warned from behind his troops, "America shall not be ruled by the bullet but by the ballot of free and just men."

With these words of peace still lingering in the smoke-filled air, eight Black people

Three students were killed and 27 wounded. Two Black demonstrators killed in the Orangeburg Massacre lie on the ground at the edge of South Carolina State College in Orangeburg on Feb. 8, 1968. Following three days of protests, which began when Black people were barred from entering a bowling alley by the proprietor, state police and national guardsmen attacked demonstrators.



In the wholesale shooting that ensued, the Guard and the police wounded fifty as well as killing Samuel Hammond, Delano Middleton and Henry Smith.

Gov. Robert E. McNair, who called the Guard out in the first place, immediately took to the air waves and told a nationwide TV audience that "The incident last night was sparked by Black Power advocates."

"It was one of the saddest days in the history of South Carolina," added the murderer. But he did not comment on the "sadness" of the All Star Bowling Alley's refusal to allow Black students to bowl.

McNair's reference to "Black Power advocates" was thought to mean the presence of Cleveland Sellers, a field coordinator of SNCC, who was one of those wounded by shotgun fire.

Sellers, 24, has been living in a town 20 miles from Orangeburg and has bravely

faced the white supremacist authorities in the area for some weeks. He has done the normal amount of speaking and organizing that SNCC organizers usually do, and under very difficult conditions.

The governor is now moving all the powerful forces of his office into position for a big whitewash and a lot of legalistic "proof" that he is in the right.

The Black people of Orangeburg are not being fooled, however. They have already mounted an economic boycott and intend to organize to go much further than that.

And organizations throughout the country are expressing their support, both in words and action.

Rap Brown may have voiced the sentiment of a very great many people when he said as part of his statement quoted above: "We will not forget the Orangeburg massacre and we will revenge."



duct, making it impossible for most of the Black people to raise the necessary money to be released.

Fires in the city were so widespread that power and telephone service were out in some areas.

Troops with bayonets bared marched through the streets of eastern and western Baltimore Monday, where 100,000 Black people live in poverty. April 7, Johnson had 2,000 troops dispatched to Baltimore at Gov. Agnew's request to help the 6,000 National Guardsmen and 1,600 city and state police. By April 8, there were 10,848 troops in Baltimore.

Five killed, 12 critically injured, over 500 injured and 3,200 arrested added to the mounting nationwide list of Black people murdered and wounded. The fifth person killed in Baltimore was a Black man shot down in the street for "suspected looting." One New York Times report of April 9 revealed that cops were using dogs against the people in the Afro-American communities.

April 8, it was reported that the Black people were beginning to use guerrilla warfare tactics to drive off the armed invaders. Police were shot at and stoned from the roofs and pelted with bottles and bricks as they patrolled the besieged Black communities.

The Hill district of Pittsburgh, too, erupted in rebellion. The Black community of 45,000 has an unemployment rate four times as high as the rest of the city. Four thousand National Guardsmen were called up, but not before a five-block stretch of small white-owned businesses had been destroyed.

In Cincinnati, the murder of a Black woman touched off a rebellion in Avondale, an Afro-American ghetto. One thousand three hundred National Guardsmen were called in and cops barricaded streets to seal off the downtown section of the city.

Government reports revealed that 61,000 troops had been called up by Tuesday, April 9, to suppress rebellions across the country. There were 31 dead, including two in Detroit and one each in Memphis, Minneapolis and Tallahassee, Fla. □

But Lindsay's fine talk didn't deter the Black people from setting fire to the property of their hated oppressors. In Brooklyn, windows were broken in a branch of the Manufacturers Hanover Trust Co. bank. And in Harlem, the people made it a policy to expropriate the goods of the shopkeepers (most of them white) who have been stealing from them for so long.

In Chicago, 22,200 armed troops, 5,000 Federal troops, 6,700 Illinois National Guardsmen and 10,500 Chicago police were called in to terrorize the Black community as the rebellion spread from the West Side ghetto to the South Side and Near North Side. Troops were mobilized from as far away as Fort Hood, Texas, and Fort Carson, Colo., to suppress what the ruling class admitted was an "insurrection." (The New York Times revealed April 6 that 15,000 Army troops have been made available to help put down the rebellions.)

The troops were called in after a 28-block area on W. Madison Street was set afire and destroyed by the angry Black population. National Guardsmen armed with sniper scopes were ordered by the racist authorities to take "aggressive action" against "lawbreakers," according to the New York Times of April 7.

Mayor Daley called a memorial meeting of the City Council for Dr. King, but at the same time threatened that "looters" should be shot. By Sunday, 11 Afro-Americans had been murdered, over 500 injured and 1,800 arrested. Bail was set at up to \$1,000 just for disorderly con-

Rev. Wright, Obama and racism in the U.S.

By LeiLani Dowell

Now that a Black presidential candidate has a real chance of winning the Democratic nomination and even the presidency, we're once again asked not to talk about oppression. We're supposed to reject the teachings of, for instance, Malcolm X, and even Martin Luther King Jr. We're supposed to deny what, for so many poor and oppressed peoples in the United States and throughout the world, is a clear-cut reality. We're not supposed to be angry—and we're definitely not supposed to speak up and fight back.

Such is the case in the media-bashing of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, former spiritual mentor of presidential candidate Barack Obama.

In a media flooded with racist, sexist and anti-LGBT images and voices, the words of a Black man calling the U.S. on its violence and oppression are labeled "hate speech." Obama's opponent for the Democratic nomination, Hillary Rodham Clinton, went so far as to put Wright on a par with Don Imus—who is back on the air even after his racist, sexist rants made international headlines.

The attack on the Rev. Wright is nothing less than nationalist baiting and anti-patriot baiting. It is being used not only to undermine Obama's campaign, but particularly in an attempt to defeat the Black struggle.

The media, as they will often do when



LeiLani Dowell, center with Nambia Donadio, left and Tyneisha Bowens, right.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO



to omit the obvious evidence Wright presented for some of his words. Here are some excerpts of Wright's comments on 9/11, the video of which can be viewed at [alternet.org](#):

"I heard Ambassador Peck on an interview yesterday. ...

This is a white man and he was upsetting the Fox news commentators to no end. ... He pointed out that what Malcolm X said ... was in fact coming true, America's chickens are coming home to roost. We took this country, by terror, away from the Sioux, the Apache, the Arawak, the Comanche, the Rapaho, the Navaho—terrorism. We took Africans from their country to build our way of ease and kept them enslaved and living in fear—terrorism.

"We bombed Grenada and killed innocent civilians, babies, non-military personnel; we bombed the Black civilian community of Panama with stealth bombers and killed unarmed teenagers and toddlers, pregnant mothers and hardworking fathers. We bombed Qaddafi's home and killed his child. ...

"We bombed Iraq, we killed unarmed civilians trying to make a living. We

attempting to defile someone's character, have reduced Wright's comments to mere snippets and sound bites of supposedly inexplicable outbursts against the U.S. Even in that limited context, it is hard to find fault in his words.

For instance, the idea that HIV was created to target people of color (and LGBT people) is not new, and understandable given the overall government attack on those communities.

The warehousing of people of color in the prison industrial complex, as well as the flooding of drugs into poor people of color communities, has been well documented. Why, then, wouldn't Wright say: "The government gives them the drugs, builds bigger prisons, passes a three-strikes law, and then wants us to sing 'God Bless America.' No, no, no, God damn America."

However, the media was also careful

Richardson endorses Obama

What impact on immigrants?

By Teresa Gutierrez

Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico endorsed the candidacy of Barack Obama for president on March 21.

In his endorsement speech, which was broadcast live on CNN and widely distributed in the news, Richardson referred to Barack Obama's earlier speech on race.

Richardson stated: "Earlier this week, Sen. Barack Obama gave an historic speech that addressed the issue of race. ... He inspired us by reminding us of the awesome potential residing in our own responsibility. He asked us to rise above our racially divided past. ...

"As a Hispanic, I was particularly touched by his words. I have been troubled by the demonization of immigrants—specifically Hispanics—by too many in this country. Hate crimes against Hispanics are rising as a direct result and now, in tough economic times, people look for scapegoats and I fear that people will continue to exploit our racial differences—and place blame on others not like them. We all know the real culprit—the disastrous economic policies of the Bush administration!"

This statement was made within the confines of the bourgeois elections and by a pro-capitalist politician from the frame of reference of an apologist for the capitalist system and all its byproducts.

Nonetheless, it is to some extent refreshing and important to hear some of this on national television.

Immigrants indeed have been the victims of a racist and hostile demonization campaign. Every day, every minute, Latin@s and other immigrants of color are being attacked in countless ways. It is not surprising therefore that even an establishment Latino figure such as Richardson, who is Mexican American,

told the truth.

The Southern Poverty Law Center just released its annual "Year in Hate" report, which documents that the number of hate groups operating in this country has grown by a whopping 48 percent to "a staggering 888" groups.

The SPLC writes, "This increase in hate activity is being fueled by the ugly rhetoric of demagogues who are using Latino immigrants as scapegoats for our country's problems."

Hate crimes against Latin@s rose by 35 percent, according to the FBI, writes the SPLC. "Experts believe that such crimes are typically carried out by people who think they are attacking immigrants," they report.

In the past three years, some 300 anti-immigrant groups have become active.

Who is the real culprit behind anti-immigrant hatred?

What does Bill Richardson's—and by extension Barack Obama's—progressive statement on immigration mean? Does it mean that the Democratic Party has made a fundamental turn to now speak the truth about the situation for immigrants? Does it mean that the right-wing campaign led by the likes of Rep. Tom Tancredo, Lou Dobbs, the Minutemen and others has been pushed back?

Does it mean that if the Democratic Party wins in November the attacks against immigrants and all working people will end?

Unfortunately, while Bill Richardson did speak the truth and it is a step forward for progressive views about immigrants to be aired on national television, it nonetheless has serious and profound limitations.

The Democratic Party as a party has not and cannot make any turn that will result

in fundamental change for immigrants or for working people in general for that matter. Gains can be won, of course, victories can be wrested. But those outcomes come principally from struggle and not from Washington.

One need only observe how the Clinton wing of the Democratic Party, which up to now has been the dominant wing, is handling the issue of racism in the presidential campaign. Unquestionably, behind the scenes the Clintons are fostering and using racism as a tool to fulfill their presidential aspirations.

"When all else fails, race bait," they must say at home to each other.

In a Counterpunch article March 24, Jeffrey St. Clair reminds us that the Bill Clinton administration carried out some of the heaviest attacks against people of color in recent times.

St. Clair writes, "Bill Clinton launched his 1992 campaign by personally overseeing the execution of Ricky Ray Rector, a brain-damaged young Black man. He wagged his finger at the rapper Sister Souljah, denouncing her music and political opinions as a danger to young minds. The Clintons pilloried their one-time friend Lani Guinier ... and booted Dr. Jocelyn Elders from her position as surgeon general."

"And that's how they treated people they knew," he emphasizes.

Plus let us not forget that under the Clinton administration one of the heaviest attacks against the poor and people of color took place: the dismantling of welfare, a social safety net that had been won by the militant struggle of the oppressed and the poor.

Hillary Rodham Clinton is not President Bill Clinton, of course, and sexism and misogyny must be condemned whenever they rear their ugly heads, even against a

bombed a plant in Sudan to pay back for the attack on our embassy; killed hundreds of hardworking people, mothers and fathers who left home to go to work that day, not knowing that they'd never get back home. We bombed Hiroshima; we bombed Nagasaki; and we nuked far more than the thousands in New York and the Pentagon—and we never batted an eye: kids playing in the playground, mothers picking up children after school, civilians, not soldiers; people just trying to make it day by day.

"We have supported state terrorism against the Palestinians and Black South Africans, and now we are indignant, because the stuff we have done overseas is now brought back into our own front yard.

"America's chickens are coming home to roost. Violence begets violence. Hatred begets hatred. And terrorism begets terrorism. A white ambassador said that, y'all, not a Black militant, not a reverend who preaches about racism."

Elections in the U.S. are always an attempt to dampen militant people's struggles, to silence our legitimate outrage at oppression and demands for justice.

With the attacks on the Rev. Wright, the continued attack on communities of color, an election season and a growing economic crisis that is sure to exacerbate misery for working people—now is the time to affirm the self-determination of oppressed peoples and stand together in solidarity with the Black struggle. □



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Teresa Gutierrez

capitalist politician. But Rodham Clinton never condemned these attacks and is on record for backing Bill Clinton's administration, including the now very unpopular NAFTA.

The Democratic Party has not changed. Nor will it change because it is a party that acts for the bosses and for the capitalist class and that serves to put a break on independent struggle and to co-opt any progressive ideas or struggles into the confines of defending the capitalist system.

But it is also a party whose base is more representative of the working class than the Republican Party. It has more people of color, more unions, more anti-war activists and so on.

Bill Richardson's statements on immigration reflect not a left turn of the Democratic Party; they reflect what is happening among that base.

The people of the U.S. for the most part are not buying into the anti-immigrant hysteria.

On more than one occasion during the presidential debates, whenever a candidate, whether it was Kucinich, Obama or Edwards, made a progressive statement about immigrants it was surprisingly greatly applauded by those in the audience. Poll after poll shows that immigration is not a major concern, especially today.

This is important.

What is needed to take this sentiment

Continued on page ??

Anti-war actions mark 5th year of Iraq occupation

Special to Workers World

The fifth anniversary of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq passed with a variety of protest actions, large and small, across the country. The overwhelming majority of the people continue to be against the war and want the troops brought home. The number of U.S. troops killed has passed 4,000, while the uncounted Iraqi losses can only be estimated but are believed to exceed one million—a figure of genocidal proportions.

But Vice President Dick Cheney, asked by ABC News on March 19 for his reaction to polls showing two-thirds of the U.S. population against the war, responded, “So?”

The Winter Soldier hearings, held March 13-16 in Silver Spring, Md., should have been big news in the days leading up to the March 19 anniversary. Instead, they were systematically boycotted by the commercial media. (For WW’s coverage, see Vol. 50, No. 12.) Veterans and active-duty military personnel testified in detail about the criminal nature of the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Here’s a small sampling of some of the anti-war events that took place around the fifth anniversary.

Atlanta

The Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition led the Fifth anniversary march to an army recruiting office on March 19. Despite threats of severe weather coming just days after the tornado that dealt major damage to many Intown neighborhoods, more than 200 people took to the streets and blocked traffic in front of the shopping center where a recruiting station is located. They then went onto the property, depositing five caskets in front of the recruiting station door. Drivers honked loudly with most people almost jubilantly waving to the protest. Two days earlier a group of Atlanta Grandmothers for Peace had been arrested at that very recruiting station.

San Francisco Bay Area

In the weeks leading up to the anniversary, S.F. Bay Area anti-war activists, workers and students protested at the



New York protests from left, “river to river” March 22, FIST at Bryant Park and Nudutol at Korea Town Plaza March 19.

Berkeley site of a U.S. Marine recruiting office, spotlighting the use of young people to fight and die for big business interests in Iraq. On March 15, hundreds rallied, marched and demonstrated in front of the Richmond, Calif., Chevron oil refinery over the giant oil corporation’s profiteering from the war for oil. Organized by the West County Toxics Coalition and many others, this action called attention to lives lost in the war abroad as well as from asthma and cancer in this heavily polluted working-class community.

On March 19, the downtown Financial District in San Francisco saw civil disobedience actions, primarily organized by Direct Action to Stop the War, all morning and afternoon. The headquarters of the Bechtel Corporation, a major war profiteer, the Federal Reserve Bank and offices of Sen. Dianne Feinstein were among the many sites of blockades and arrests. During evening rush hour, thousands more rallied in the Civic Center Plaza and marched to the Mission District, called out by Act Now to Stop War & End Racism. These and many other protests, including in Oakland and San Jose, show renewed vigor to end the war of aggression in Iraq.

Buffalo, N.Y.

On March 22, a noisy caravan of more than thirty placard-covered vehicles snaked slowly all over the city of Buffalo, snarling traffic as it called for immediate

withdrawal of all troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. Many drivers slowed down and honked along with the caravan, reading the signs and waving their approval.

The moving demonstration ended in a large indoor rally with featured speaker Geoff Millard of Buffalo, now D.C. president of Iraq Veterans Against the War and a participant in the Winter Soldier 2008 hearings. The day’s events were pulled together by a very broad coalition of peace and justice groups, including the Western NY Peace Center, the Buffalo and Western NY International Action Center, Code Pink, Stop the Violence Coalition, Buffalo Forum, Workers World Party and many more.

Cleveland youth protest

Planned just one week in advance, a march of 100 people, mostly youth, went through the streets of downtown Cleveland on March 20 displaying the Iraqi flag, the anarchist black flag, and countless banners and placards condemning the war in Iraq. It was called not by traditional anti-war groups and peace organizations but by the Shaker Heights High School chapter of Students for a Democratic Society, which had formed earlier in the month.

Some 50 students from Shaker had defied school regulations and walked out to attend the demonstration. Another 30 young people from Lakeland Community College joined them. Supporters of Workers World Party, the Revolutionary Communist Party and the Northeast Ohio Anti-War Coalition were present, as was the Baldwin-Wallace Chapter of Fight Imperialism—Stand Together.

FIST members carried the Iraqi flag to show solidarity with the resistance. Other FIST members distributed the group’s newsletter “Young and Furious” as well

as Workers World newspaper.

One FIST member spoke to the crowd about the horrors of the war in Iraq. When he announced he was a Marxist, the crowd burst into applause. The applause grew louder when he said he felt the country needed a socialist revolution.

Chants of “Stop the war, Yes we can, SDS is back again” were raised, and “What do we want? Revolution! When do we want it? Now!” and “Power to the working class! Kick the bosses in the ass!”

Youth are clearly ready to fight back against this bloody, unjust war.

Also in Cleveland, in a dramatic display of grief and anger, on March 25 antiwar activists marked the occasion of the 4,000th death among U.S. troops. Hundreds spread out across the mile-long Superior-Detroit bridge that spans the Cuyahoga River and connects the city’s east and west sides. Stretched across both sides of the bridge was a string of 4,000 paper sheets, each with the name and age of one of the dead and each representing 250 Iraqis killed by the genocidal war. Demonstrators also held up 4,000 holiday lights and chanted “Hey hey ho ho this rotten war has got to go.” The memorial was sponsored by the Northeast Ohio Antiwar Coalition and Peace Action.

In New York, FIST youth held a picket March 19 before the new BankAmerica building near Bryant Park with the signs, “End the occupation, stop foreclosures” before joining a candle light vigil protest by organized by Nodutol in the Korea Town Plaza.

Dianne Mathiowetz in Atlanta, Joan Marquardt in San Francisco, Ellie Dorritie in Buffalo and Caleb T. Maupin and Martha Grevatt in Cleveland contributed to this article.

Rep. Conyers speaks up for the Angola 3

By Caleb T. Maupin

Rep. John Conyers, chairperson of the U.S. House Judiciary Committee, recently toured one of the most harsh and repressive prisons in the United States. He came to Louisiana State Penitentiary to investigate the case of the Angola 3. Though Robert King has finally been freed through mass struggle, Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace remain behind bars.

Conyers visited with the two prisoners on March 20 for two hours. On the same day, Louisiana Rep. Cedric Richmond held a press conference in Baton Rouge on the case.

These men were young when they entered the prison at Angola with rebellious spirits in the 1970s. They formed a chapter of the Black Panther Party within the prison’s walls. They led their fellow prisoners in hunger strikes and sit-ins. They made demands and fought back against the conditions of the capitalist hellhole at Angola.

In a written statement, Conyers urged “a swift and just resolution” of the matter.

He said that he recently became aware of evidence that may suggest both Wallace and Woodfox were wrongly convicted in the death of a guard at the Louisiana State Penitentiary.

The repressive state apparatus was used to punish King, Woodfox and Wallace for standing up. From every prison guard to every racist cop on the street, this repressive state apparatus is used to keep the repressive order of this society intact.

But things are changing for the Angola 3. Robert King was freed in 2001 when the state could no longer deny his innocence. MSNBC, a major news channel, recently ran a television spot on the Angola 3’s case. In the spot, they interviewed the widow of the officer Wallace and Woodfox are accused of killing. She openly stated before a national TV audience that she, a grieving widow, had doubts about whether the men were guilty or not.

It has taken years of mass struggle, but with the increasing social climate of dissent, the hope is that the Angola 3 may soon reunite, outside of the prison walls. □

Richardson endorses Obama

Continued from page 7

among the masses and elsewhere and channel it into the correct direction.

Bill Richardson said, “We all know the real culprit (of the scapegoating of immigrants)— the disastrous economic policies of the Bush Administration!”

This is not the whole truth. The real culprit is not just the Bush administration. Look at the Clinton administration’s record. Look at how the Democratic Party has handled every major issue of concern to the masses: the housing and employment attacks, the debate on immigration, the war in Iraq and so on. No real solution for fundamental change has been presented.

The real culprit is not the Bush administration but the capitalist system itself, which historically has taken advantage of immigrant labor as needed. One day it embraces migrants when the economy is booming, the next day they are scapegoats

when the economy is in a decline.

Opportunity or business as usual?

When Bill Richardson, a Latino, stood on the stage with Barack Obama and spoke against racism, it was a step forward for the struggle against racism despite the fact that both are proponents of capitalism. It was a gain for Black and Brown unity, even though a limited gain.

A national debate on racism occurred. Bourgeois pundits said Obama spoke to people like “adults.”

Many people of color in this country must have felt a glimmer of hope when representatives of two peoples who have been so historically under attack in this country came together in unity on a national stage even if for just a tiny moment and spoke out against the big “R”—racism.

This sense of hope will quickly vanish however if one thing does not occur.

And that is the struggle of the masses in

MEXICO

International meeting debates anti-imperialist issues

By John Catalinotto and Teresa Gutierrez
Mexico City

Political activists from 40 countries and 90 socialist and communist parties worldwide—some of them in power in their countries or participating in the government—took part from March 13-15 here in Mexico City in the 12th of a series of annual seminars organized by the Labor Party of Mexico (Partido del Trabajo—PT) to discuss key issues facing the working class and the world’s people. Hundreds of people from Mexico also participated.

Among the many vital questions discussed was one that recent events had imposed on the seminar: the attack by the near-fascist Colombian regime inside Ecuador on March 1 that killed revolutionary leader Raúl Reyes and about 16 other people, including some Mexican students who were visiting the encampment.

Mexico’s rightist politicians and corporate media attacked the students as “narco-terrorists” and baited the PT for having invited the Colombian guerrilla organization, the FARC, to the seminar in the past. Since 2002 FARC representatives have been unable to get visas to visit Mexico. Relatives of the wounded and murdered Mexican youths spoke at the seminar. To its credit, the seminar condemned the Colombian regime for the assault on Ecuadoran sovereignty.

Another central question for the mostly Latin American participants was the development of the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela. Marelis Perez Marcano, a deputy in the Venezuelan National Assembly, spoke at length defending the gains of Venezuelans since Hugo Chávez was first elected president in 1998 and describing the situation in glowingly optimistic terms. The party named Homeland for All (Patria Para Todos—PPT) had several representatives present, who, while defending the Bolivarian Revolution, raised many critiques of the current situation.

Besides the Venezuelans, others also participated in this discussion in a spirit of solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution.

PT Mexico hosts the meeting

The PT, host of the seminar, is one of the two major registered Mexican parties that supported the election of Andrés Manuel López Obrador in 2006. López Obrador, the leader of Mexico’s social democratic left, narrowly lost that election in what many believe was due to electoral fraud by the right-wing parties. In Mexico the

PT is almost exclusively engaged in electoral politics and is the second-strongest left party in parliament. The strongest party of the social democratic left is López Obrador’s Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD).

Under the leadership of its secretary general, Sen. Alberto Anaya, the PT has for 12 years now hosted this broad international discussion among both social democratic and revolutionary parties worldwide. Among the parties in power that took part in this 12th Seminar on “Parties and a New Society” were the communist parties of Cuba, China, Laos, Vietnam and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea. The parties now running governments that oppose neoliberalism in Latin America—such as the FSLN in Nicaragua, the Workers Party in Brazil, the presidential parties in Bolivia and Ecuador as well as the Unified Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), also were there.

Parties that were former guerrilla movements from El Salvador and Guatemala also took part, as did a representative of Batasuna from the Basque Country. There were also trade unionists and economists present.

There was a large delegation from Cuba, with a major report from the Committees in Defense of the Revolution, a mass organization of neighborhood activists. The hundreds of people in the audience always cheered and applauded any mention of Cuba, of Fidel Castro or of the legacy of Che Guevara.

Organizers set up the three-day agenda to cover the following topics:

- The construction of an alternative project to the nation.
- Neocolonialism and



WWW PHOTO: S JOHN CATALINOTTO

From left, Roberto Regalado of the Communist Party of Cuba and Senator Alberto Anaya of the PT-Mexico, then Nelly del Castillo Diaz, relative of Juan Gonzalez del Castillo, and Lucia Morett Alvarez, aunt of Mina Alvarez, the young students who were killed and wounded, respectively, on March 1 in Ecuador by the U.S.-Colombian attack.

the counteroffensive of imperialism to the advances of the left.

- Thematic forums, including migration; natural resources and the environment, including global warming; means of communication; electoral systems.
- Case studies, including Nicaragua, Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, China, Belarus.

Aside from Venezuela, probably the most controversial discussion took place in examining the developments in China.

Events in Mexico

As the seminar was taking place, there were two important struggles unfolding in Mexico itself. The SME, the union of elec-

trical workers, with a long history of militant labor struggles, was on the verge of a strike to take place midnight, March 16. The electrical workers voted that



Marelis Perez Marcano, deputy in the Venezuelan National Assembly.

day to accept a contract with a 4.25 percent increase in wages and a government promise not to privatize the electrical power industry.

On another front, the PRD was organizing a mass demonstration for March 18 demanding there be no privatization of PEMEX, the oil company nationalized 70 years earlier that same date. Some tens of thousands joined the action.

These struggles, and that of Mexicans against the NAFTA “free trade agreement” that has turned the country into a major importer of corn, were also introduced into the seminar.

The working group for next year’s seminar is planning to focus it on a discussion of the capitalist economic crisis centered in the United States and its repercussions on the rest of the world.

Gutierrez and Catalinotto represented Workers World Party at the seminar. Gutierrez, who is also on the organizing committee of the May 1 Coalition, presented a paper and discussed the struggle for immigrant rights in the U.S. Catalinotto presented a paper and discussed the potential for a revived workers movement in the imperialist countries, especially the U.S., as a result of imperialist globalization. □

Bread price hike stirs struggle in Egypt

By G. Dunkel

A spike in the price of wheat flour as February ended has led both to an increase in hunger and to a series of sharp workers’ struggles in Egypt, as well as attempts by the government to make concessions.

The vast majority of Egyptians depend on bread for 70 percent of their calories and protein, and some reports say more bread is eaten per person in Egypt than in any other country. Since the price leap, bread lines in the poor neighborhoods of Egypt have grown ever longer and more contentious. Al-Jazeera Television on March 12 reported that some people were waiting seven hours or more for their ration and that at least 10 people had died on breadlines in the first two weeks of March.

The Egyptian government will spend nearly \$2.6 billion this year on subsidizing bread and cooking oil, but it admits that a lot—as much as 40 percent—of the bread production destined for the poor is being diverted to the private market.

Doctors held a two-hour protest March 15 over their low salaries—averaging \$50 a month—which the jump in the price of bread made it harder for them to accept.

What was notable about this strike is that the doctors’ union is led by a Christian woman. (Coptic Christians make up about 15 percent of Egypt’s population.)

Textile workers, who held a series of very successful strikes last year, have said that they will go out in early April to demand immediate wage hikes that will compensate them for the increased cost of bread. There have been a number of actions at individual textile plants already.

Ever since the 1978 Camp David meeting, Egypt, with its 76.2 million people, has been the United States’ most important client state in the Arab world. Egypt has gotten billions in military aid and in the 1970s and 1980s also got substantial economic support. Currently it has a 10-year military aid commitment from the U.S. worth a total of \$13 billion.

In return for this substantial aid, Egypt protects Israel’s western flank and safeguards U.S. access to key transportation arteries, like the Suez Canal. Some 861 U.S. ships got expedited passage through the canal from 2001 to 2005, and Egypt allowed 36,553 overflights by U.S. combat aircraft during the same period. (Middle East Report, Spring 2008)

The neoliberal restructuring that the

U.S. imposed on Egypt, along with its military aid, began paying off last year for the Egyptian bourgeoisie. The World Bank ranked Egypt as the most improved investment economy in the world and Egyptian companies’ profits and opportunities soared.

Similarly, the Egyptian bourgeoisie has been able to use its U.S.-empowered army and repressive forces to disrupt its internal opponents like the Muslim Brotherhood.

But the Egyptian workers and poor, the vast majority of the country, have been left holding a bag that is mostly empty except for promises for a future paradise. Unemployment is down, but almost all the new jobs are in the service sector with no benefits and no stability. Housing is booming for the wealthy and in short supply for anybody else. Education and health care are also in sharp decline.

But people will struggle if they can’t get enough to eat, and right now that is the overriding issue in Egypt. President Hosni Mubarak has called on the army to use its own ovens to bake bread to feed the people. Given the continued upward pressure on the worldwide price of food, it is not clear how long this army campaign can last. □

the streets. Only a mass struggle can truly advance the goals of ending racism, winning immigrant rights, stopping housing foreclosures as well as ending the war.

Obama and Richardson, even in their prestigious positions, have felt the hand of racism. Every person of color in this country has.

With Obama and Richardson openly airing the issue of racism and pro-immigrant positions, is this an opportunity to advance the struggle?

Can class conscious communists, can revolutionaries, can independent progressives fuel the fire for change in this country from below? Can they seize the moment away from the pro-capitalist liberals and build a struggle among the masses so potent, so multinational, so big and broad, so class conscious that the center of gravity will shift from the podium of the elections to the streets of this country?

We believe so. □



Bring it home

This issue of Workers World expresses our point of view on some of the major, and often controversial, subjects of the day: Tibet, the national elections, and the housing and mortgage crisis, to name a few.

So we decided to use the editorial space to write about Workers World newspaper itself, especially some of the special coverage this year.

Since it is the 50th year of Workers World’s existence, each week we have been running one or two articles from each year of the newspaper, starting with our first issue in 1959. We’ve already gotten favorable feedback on this historical coverage. Upon reaching 1968, we realized that one week was inadequate for that momentous year of struggle, so we’re devoting several issues to reprints from that year.

Our coverage of the presidential elections and primaries has also been noticed. Specifically, it has been called “nuanced,” with this word meant as a compliment. This is because we can see the contradictory character of this election, especially of the Barack Obama candidacy. Our understanding that the Democratic Party is an imperialist party beholden

to and representing the capitalist ruling class does not prevent us from seeing the historic nature of Obama’s candidacy. Or from understanding that it may be necessary to mobilize against the racist assault on him that has already begun with Obama’s demonization in the big business media via the righteous remarks of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright (see WW commentary, page 7).

We also have a view on the events in Tibet that puts us squarely against the opinions expressed in all the corporate media in the imperialist world. Our big advantage here is that we base our reporting on facts and not on the inventions of the capitalist media.

This editorial is meant to point out that we express an opinion—based on facts but also on understanding how class interests color all the news—that can help explain the big events of the day. And that we deserve support—certainly from those who agree with us—so that we can express these opinions with ever-greater effectiveness.

To see how to support WW, look at the supporter program ad on page 2. Or click on the “donate” button if you’re reading this online. Thanks. ☐

MUNDO OBRERO

Audiencias de Soldad@ Invernal

Las tropas confirman crímenes de guerra por EEUU

Continúa de Pagina 12
El habló sobre cómo las Reglas de Enfrentamiento fueron cambiadas cada vez para incitar aún más a la masacre de civiles. Durante su segundo turno, si una persona “llevaba una pala, o estaba en la azotea hablando por el celular, o estaba fuera luego del toque de queda, había que matarles. Es imposible decir cuántas personas murieron por esto. Ya para mi tercer turno, nos decían que simplemente disparáramos a la gente, que los oficiales nos ayudarían”.

Un marino veterano ametrallador, John Michael Turner, se arrancó las medallas y las tiró al piso mientras testificaba sobre sus actos de disparar contra gente que él sabía que era inocente. “Yo quiero decir que lamento el odio y la destrucción que yo y otros hemos ocasionado a gente inocente,” concluyó. “No está bien, y esto es lo que está pasando, y hasta que la gente no escuche lo que está pasando, esto va a continuar. Ya yo no soy el monstruo que una vez fui”.

El evento fue transmitido en vivo por el Internet pero fue boicoteado por todos los medios de comunicación corporativos de los EEUU. Estuvo muy bien organizado, con un equipo de apoyo logístico proporcionado por Veteranos por la Paz y Veteranos de Vietnam en Contra de la Guerra. Profesionales legales y de salud mental estuvieron disponibles en todo momento.

Mientras que la mayoría de l@s panelistas era miembr@ del VICG, testigos peritos también testificaron. Civiles iraquíes, incluyendo a refugiad@s, describieron sus experiencias con la ocupación por medio de detalladas video-entrevistas que habían sido grabadas en Irak, Jordania y Siria. La Dra. Dahlia Wasfi, miembra de la junta asesora del VICG habló sobre la ocupación de Palestina.

El VICG es una creciente organización con más de 800 miembr@s. El liderazgo es diverso: el presidente de la junta directiva nació en Nicaragua y el co-presidente es africano-americano. La tesorera y la directora ejecutiva son mujeres. El grupo tiene una política de aceptación a las lesbianas, gays, bisexuales y trasgéner@s.

La mayoría de l@s miembr@s viene de los rangos enlistados y tienen menos de 30 años de edad. Son de áreas urbanas y rurales. Muchos estaban en vía de volverse oficiales —la base de cualquier organización militar. Su membresía en VICG es una derrota importante para la máquina de guerra del imperialismo de los EEUU.

L@s lector@s pueden revisar la audiencia y los testimonios en www.ivaw.org.

El autor es miembro del capítulo 021 de Veteranos por la Paz y participó como miembro del equipo de apoyo en la vista del Soldado del Invierno.

Behind the anti-China Olympics campaign

By Gary Wilson

Can there be any doubt that the U.S. government is behind the attacks on China targeting the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing?

The events that unfolded at the lighting of the Olympic flame March 24 in Greece were most revealing. A protest briefly disrupted the ceremonies. The news reports all said that the protest was about Tibet.

Three protesters were arrested, but then immediately released. None were Tibetan.

The three French men, it turns out, are all from a notorious right-wing organization that’s funded by the governments of France and the United States as well as some of the richest capitalists in the world. They all are employees of the outfit called Reporters Without Borders.

Based in France, the group gets funding from the U.S. government’s National Endowment for Democracy as well as the Soros Foundation and the Center for a Free Cuba. U.S. State Department Special Envoy Otto Reich is a trustee of the Center. He was also the lawyer for the Bacardi liquor dynasty that was kicked out of Cuba, along with the hated dictator Fulgencio Batista. The president of the Center is Frank Calzón, a former leader of the terrorist organization Cuban American National Foundation.

Reporters Without Borders unmasked

“Reporters Without Borders Unmasked” is the title of a report by Diana Barahona on Counterpunch.org. RWB has an “obsession” with Cuba, which Barahona says can be directly traced to its funding. What may not be obvious is that the Center for a Free Cuba is a front organization for U.S. covert operations against Cuba. It is completely funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, an agency that has long fronted for U.S. covert operations.

RWB does not just target Cuba, though Cuba has been its primary target for many years—the Cuban press generally refers to RWB as an ultra-reactionary organization with ties to counterrevolutionary terrorists. At the time of the U.S. contra war against the Sandinista government, the RWB carried on operations against Nicaragua.

Today it also has operations targeting Venezuela, Bolivia, Iran, People’s Korea, and the Palestinians, according to a report by French journalist Salim Lamrani. (“The deceit of Reporters Without Borders,” ZNet.com)

RWB was merely fulfilling its contract with the U.S. government when it carried out the little disruption of the Olympic Games opening ceremony. It got maximum publicity in the compliant U.S. media for its anti-China message.

NED: CIA of the 21st century

The shadowy hand of the National Endowment for Democracy can be found in many of the anti-China reports over the last few weeks.

The NED is a U.S. government agency that does in the post-Cold War era much of what the CIA had been doing during the U.S. counter-revolutionary operations against the Soviet Union. In fact, that’s almost exactly how its role was described by the NED’s first acting president, Allen Weinstein, who said, “A lot of what we [the NED] do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA.” (Washington Post, Sept. 22, 1991)

In the U.S., little is known about the NED except for its public relations handouts. The big business-controlled press usually just repeats what’s in those handouts.

Australian writer Michael Barker, in a report last Aug. 13 published by Canada-based Global Research, detailed at that time the rise of groups aimed at breaking Tibet away from China, all of which were NED-funded.

The International Campaign for Tibet, for example, not only is funded by the NED but also has a board of directors that includes several former assistant secretaries of the U.S. State Department and former U.S. AID officials.

The Tibet Fund is another NED payee, as is the Tibet Information Network and the Tibetan Literary Society, Barker reports. Also getting funds from the NED is the Tibetan Review Trust Society, which publishes the English-only Tibetan Review magazine. Finally, Barker says, the NED also set up the Voice of Tibet short-wave radio station.

About 38 percent of the U.S. government’s nonmilitary China-related programs are allocated through the NED. According to the NED’s Web site, other recipients of its China funds include the Gu-Chu-Sum Movement of Tibet, the Tibetan Women’s Association and the Longsho Youth Movement of Tibet.

All this raises more questions than answers about what is now happening in China. Many events that are reported to be about Tibet focus on the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Like the disruption of the Olympic torch lighting in Greece, the commentators quoted most frequently in the U.S. media are not Tibetans; most are from the U.S. and say they are speaking for the Tibetans.

While there are problems in Tibet, some acknowledged by the Chinese government, the anti-Olympics campaign appears to be based in Washington, not Tibet.

The current leaders of People’s China have chosen what they call the market road to socialism. They attribute their great industrial boom to this policy. But capitalist market relations by their very character breed inequality and promote divisions among peoples, breaking down the bonds of socialist solidarity. Nevertheless, China still retains strong traditions and political, social and economic institutions based on its great revolutionary past.

The question is to what extent rising inequalities may have facilitated the imperialist campaign against China now focused on Tibet. ☐

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Expansion of U.S. bases spurs Philippine resistance

By Sara Flounders

A category of semi-secret U.S. bases is vastly extending the Pentagon’s military presence around the globe. Innocuously called CSLs, for Cooperative Security Locations, these bases are a new, covert form of intervention.

The CSLs and other loose security agreements allow the Pentagon to set up facilities and structures, lease warehouses, and maintain roads, airstrips and seaports using a combination of private contractors and local forces. The Pentagon maintains a network of military bases in about 70 countries. But the new Collective Security Locations are being established in up to 100 other countries.

Senior Editor Adam J. Hebert wrote an article in the August 2006 Air Force Magazine online entitled “Presence, Not Permanence” that described the Pentagon’s changing approach to its worldwide bases and its need, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, to reorganize and break out of its “strategically obsolete Cold War straitjacket.”

Hebert described how, with the closing of bases, such as in Iceland, the Air Force didn’t bring home large numbers of airmen but instead updated its basing structure with a series of new locations and temporary bases.

Asia Times online of June 1, 2005, reporting on an earlier background briefing by a senior official of the Defense Department, explained that the U.S. had been operating from “5,458 distinct and discrete military installations around the world. ... We don’t need those little pieces of property anymore.”

The Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Structure of the U.S., also known as the Overseas Basing Commission, was established by Congress to conduct a thorough study on the global re-alignment of U.S. bases. The commission defined a series of new basing arrangements.

The CSLs were supposedly envisioned as facilities with little or no permanent U.S. presence, maintained with contractor and/or host nation support. They contain prepositioned equipment and are rapidly scalable and expandable. The Overseas Basing Commission also defines Forward Operating Sites as places with prepositioned equipment that can host rotational forces and be a focus for bilateral and regional training.

Other categories, such as Forward Support Location, Preposition Site, and En Route Infrastructure, are defined as new base arrangements beyond the traditional Main Operating Base that has permanently stationed combat forces and command and control structures.

The expanding U.S. military presence throughout East, South and Central Asia appears to be focused on surrounding and attempting to isolate the growing influence of China.

The Pentagon also uses joint military exercises to exert overwhelming influence over the militaries of many smaller and developing nations. Former U.S. Pacific Command head Admiral Thomas Fargo explained in March 2003 that relationships built through exercises and training are “our biggest guarantor of access in time of need.”

There are CSLs in Thailand, throughout South and Central Asia, and in Senegal, Africa.

Philippines example

Growing popular struggles against the joint military exercises and the CSL bases in the Philippines may have an impact on anti-base struggles around the world.

For over 110 years the Philippines has

been U.S. imperialism’s prime military outpost and stepping stone to China and the Asian mainland. U.S. bases in the Philippines enabled the U.S. military to control strategic sea lanes.

Philippine law has banned U.S. bases since a mass movement forced them out in 1992. Yet today 30,000 to 50,000 U.S. troops are stationed there and are in constant operation. Under the Balikatan joint war exercises, the Pentagon is bringing in logistical equipment and building installations.

According to a Feb. 26 report from Foreign Policy in Focus, the number of troops, ships, equipment and infrastructure grows each year. The year 2005 saw 24 joint military exercises involving U.S. and Philippine troops. This grew to 37 scheduled exercises in 2006—or one U.S. military exercise every 10 days.

“Training missions” and military exercises mean a continuing presence of U.S. troops in the Philippines. It also comes with a special name: the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines. The JSOTF-P has been based in the Philippines for more than six years on an ongoing “temporary training mission.” The U.S. stay has become open-ended and, as with the “temporary” CSL bases, its permanence is unofficial and unacknowledged.

Immediately after 9/11 Washington used as an excuse for the re-entry of its forces that the Philippines needed help in fighting a “terrorist threat” from a small, secretive armed group known as Abu Sayyaf. The Manila Times of Aug. 27, 2007, reported that, “Even as the United States denies plans to set up a military base in the Philippines, the American military is reportedly building a host of projects across Mindanao.”

A Rand Corporation report prepared for the U.S. Air Force entitled “Ungoverned Territories” and available online summarizes U.S. military presence globally. It highlights the Pakistan/Afghanistan border area, East Africa, West Africa, the Caucasus, the Venezuela/Colombia border and Mindanao Island in the Philippines. The U.S. “area of operations” in the Philippines presently covers 8,000 square miles, including the entire island of Mindanao and surrounding islands.

Paying for occupation

In the Philippines and many other underdeveloped countries drowning in debt, the “host” country must pay for the U.S. military presence.

According to a Mutual Logistics Support Agreement, available online, that the Philippines signed with the U.S. in November 2002, the Philippine government must supply the Pentagon with all the logistical support needed during the endless military and training “exercises” and “other U.S. military deployments” to maintain their forces in the region. This Support Agreement lists everything from food and water to ammunition, spare parts and components, billeting, transportation, communication, medical services, operation support, training services, repair and maintenance, storage services, port services and construction of “temporary structures.”

Everything the U.S. used to supply for its own use at its former bases in the region, such as the giant Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base, is now to be provided by the impoverished Philippine government on an as-need basis.

The newsletter U.S. Intervention Watch, published by Initiatives for Peace in Mindanao in coordination with US Troops Out Now! Mindanao Coalition, explains that the widely publicized U.S. humanitarian missions are really military

operations and a cover for a permanent military presence.

“The objective is not to provide health care to peasant farmers, but to secure U.S. economic interests in the Asia-Pacific by turning the Philippines into a base of operation. This base will serve to protect U.S. multi-billion dollar investments and promote prospective commerce in the Philippines in oil, energy, minerals and plantations, keep an eye on the Malacca Straits where 25 percent of all globally traded oil passes, and threaten nearby China as its rise to global power continues,” says the newsletter.

Massacre made in USA

U.S. occupation troops bring attacks, massacres and rapes of the local civilian population. According to a news article in Bulatlat, a weekly Philippine online news magazine, “U.S. troops were present during the February 4 assault by combined Army and Navy elite forces on Barangay village, Ipil, Maimbung, Sulu, that killed eight non-combatants, including an Army soldier home on vacation.”

Sulu’s Governor Abdulsakur Tan said: “This is not the first time that the U.S.

PHILIPPINES Struggle to find disappeared son

By Cheryl LaBash
Los Angeles

Jonas Burgos is one of more than a thousand people who have disappeared since 2001 in the Philippines under President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

His mother, Edith Burgos, and Mervin Toquero from the National Council of Churches in the Philippines spoke here on March 17 about their search for Jonas. Ms. Burgos spoke in at least seven major U.S. cities and was taking the case of her son and the others who have been disappeared to the U.S. Congress and the United Nations.

In a solidarity message, the Los Angeles chapter of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO, stated that it “is deeply concerned that activists organizing for civil rights and economic justice are being targeted, disappeared by force and/or extra-judicially killed. In 2005 APALA had passed a national resolution denouncing the massacre of striking workers at Hacienda Luisita and political killings after members of APALA visited the Philippines as part of the International Solidarity Mission.”

On March 14, 2007, Marie Hilao-Enriquez, secretary-general of Karapatan Alliance for the Advancement of People’s Rights in the Philippines, testified before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. (www.senate.gov)

She explained the development of the current human rights crisis, and its link to U.S. funds and policy, that has engulfed Jonas Burgos, an organic farmer and member of the Alliance of Farmers in Bulacan, a chapter of the Alliance of Farmers of the Philippines:

“In the aftermath of the attacks in the U.S. on Sept. 11, 2001, Mrs. Arroyo declared her support to the U.S. ‘war on terror.’ The Philippines began receiving increased U.S. military aid and was named America’s major ‘non-NATO ally in Asia.’

“Based on the June 2005 World Policy Institute Special Report, the Philippines has requested Foreign Military Funding (FMF) aid from the U.S. government of \$4.5 billion in 2006, a full \$1 billion increase from the FY 2001 level. ...

troops were reported to have taken part in Philippine military operations in Sulu.” He corroborated the U.S. role in an attack in early 2007, when U.S. troops were supposedly doing “road construction” in the village of Barangay Bato-Bato, Indanan.

Temogen Tulawie, convener of the Concerned Citizens of Sulu and former Jolo councilor, said the latest massacre is part of a larger picture. Starting in 2003, Balikatan military exercises were held in Sulu. This provoked waves of protest from the people, who still remember an historic massacre committed in 1906 when hundreds of Moro resistance fighters were gunned down by U.S. occupation forces.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which signed a peace agreement with the Philippine government in 1996, has filed a case before the U.N. Human Rights Council on the latest massacre.

The U.S. military presence is no longer covert in the Philippines. A mass movement is paying growing attention and mobilizing against this new form of U.S. occupation. As Initiatives for Peace and U.S. Troops Out Now! Mindanao Coalition explained: “Mindanao has a long history of resistance to colonization.” □



WW PHOTO: APOLLO VICTORIA

Edith Burgos with Mervin Toquero in Los Angeles, March 17.

“An internal security plan, codenamed *Oplan Bantay Laya* (OBL or Operation Freedom Watch), viewed as patterned after the Phoenix Program in Vietnam in the 1960s, was created in early 2002. ... It highlights the ‘neutralization’ of what the Philippine authorities call ‘front organizations’ leaders and members as ‘enemies of the state.’ In effect, the new anti-terrorist/insurgent campaign makes no distinction between armed guerillas and unarmed activists, making the latter fair targets of political assassinations and abductions by suspected state-organized death squads.”

A report prepared for the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations in Geneva, “Let the Stones Cry Out—An Ecumenical Report on Human Rights in the Philippines and a Call to Action,” states: “Victims of these mounting cases of human rights violations have included highly respected leaders and members of churches and faith communities, human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists—as well as peasants; fisherfolk; labor and student leaders and activists; community leaders; members of the national minorities, including Muslim communities; women and children—many of them involved in peace and social justice, land and labor rights advocacy, electoral and governance reform, and the defense and promotion of press freedom, women’s and children’s rights, indigenous people’s and Muslims’ rights to ancestral domain, territorial integrity and self-determination.” (www.oikoumene.org)

For more information go to www.stopthekillings.org or www.freejonasburgosmovement.blogspot.com. □

Tíbet y la conmemoración del ‘levantamiento’ de la CIA del 19 de marzo de 1959.

Por Gary Wilson

¿Se ha vuelto el Tíbet en la vanguardia de una nueva lucha de liberación nacional? ¿O es otra cosa lo que está pasando allí?

Los medios noticieros de EEUU están llenos con los eventos que se están desarrollando en Tíbet. Cada reporte, sin embargo, parece tener una nota diciendo que mucho de lo que están reportando no puede ser confirmado. Las fuentes de los reportes son turbias y desconocidas. Si las prácticas del pasado son un indicio, es probable que el Departamento del Estado y la CIA sean las fuentes primarias.

Una fuente citada con frecuencia es John Ackerly. ¿Quién es Ackerly? Como presidente de la Campaña Internacional para el Tíbet, él y su grupo parecen trabajar estrechamente con el gobierno de los EEUU, con el Departamento de Estado y con el Congreso como parte de sus operaciones relacionadas con el Tíbet. Durante la Guerra Fría, el trabajo de Ackerly era el de trabajar con los “disidentes” en Europa del Este, particularmente en Rumania en 1978-80.

Una agencia privada de seguridad internacional en Washington, Harbor Lane Associates, cuenta con Ackerly y la Campaña Internacional para el Tíbet como clientes, junto al ex Director de la CIA y el Presidente de los EEUU George H.W. Bush y el ex jefe del Pentágono, William Cohen.

Prensa Asociada, Reuters y las demás agencias del oeste, todas citan a Ackerly como la fuente más importante para reportes exagerados sobre los conflictos que están ocurriendo en Tíbet. Por ejemplo, MSNBC reportó el 15 de marzo:

“John Ackerly, de la Campaña Internacional para el Tíbet, un grupo que apoya las demandas por la autonomía del Tíbet, dijo en una declaración enviada por correo electrónico que temía que ‘cientos

de tibetanos hayan sido detenidos y estén siendo interrogados y torturados”.

Qiangba Puncog, un tibetano que es presidente del Gobierno Regional Autónomo del Tíbet describió la situación en una forma muy distinta en una conferencia de prensa en Beijing el 17 de marzo.

Según china.org.cn, el portal en la red de China, el líder tibetano dijo que el 14 de marzo personas aliadas al exiliado Dalai Lama “participaron en golpizas, robos, destrozos e incendios irresponsables y sus actividades pronto se extendieron a otras partes de la ciudad. Esta gente se enfocó en las tiendas callejeras, las escuelas primarias y secundarias, hospitales, bancos, facilidades de electricidad y comunicaciones y organizaciones noticieras. Incendiaron vehículos que transitaban, persiguieron y golpearon a los pasajeros en la calle, y lanzaron asaltos contra tiendas, lugares de teléfonos públicos, y edificios gubernamentales. Su conducta ha resultado en daños severos a la vida y a la propiedad de personas locales, y han minado gravemente el orden en Lhasa.

“Trece civiles inocentes fueron quemados o apuñalados a muerte en el motín en Lhasa el 14 de marzo, y 61 policías resultaron heridos, seis de ellos gravemente”, dijo Qiangba Puncog.

“Las estadísticas también muestran que los amotinadores incendiaron más de 300 localidades, incluyendo casas residenciales y 214 tiendas, y destruyeron y quemaron 56 vehículos. . .

“Qiangba Puncog también dijo que el personal de seguridad no llevaba ni usaba ninguna arma letal al tratar el alboroto el viernes pasado.

La violencia fue el resultado de una conspiración entre grupos locales y extranjeros que abogan por la ‘independencia del Tíbet’”, según Qiangba Puncog. “La camarilla del Dalai ingenió, planeó y cuidadosamente organizó el alboroto”.

“Según Qiangba Puncog, hace 49 años

en el 10 de marzo, los dueños de esclavos del viejo Tíbet, lanzaron una rebelión armada con el propósito de dividir el país. Esa rebelión fue aplastada rápidamente. Cada año desde 1959, algunos separatistas dentro y fuera de China han auspiciado actividades en ese día de rebelión. . .

“Ningún intento secesionista de sabotear la estabilidad del Tíbet ganará el apoyo del pueblo y está destinado a fracasar”, dijo él.

Reunión en Nueva Delhi

Lo que está teniendo lugar en el Tíbet ha sido preparado desde hace mucho tiempo. Una conferencia tuvo lugar en Nueva Delhi, India, en junio pasado, auspiciada por “Los amigos del Tíbet”. Fue descrita como una conferencia para promover la secesión del Tíbet.

El sitio de noticias phayul.com reportó en el tiempo en que ocurría esa conferencia, que “los Juegos Olímpicos podían proveer la oportunidad para que los tibetanos salieran a protestar”. Se hizo un llamado para que se hicieran protestas mundialmente, una marcha de exiliad@s desde la India al Tíbet, y manifestaciones dentro del Tíbet — todo ligado a las próximas Olimpiadas en Beijing.

Ese llamado fue seguido por otro llamado este enero pasado para un “levantamiento” en el Tíbet, emitido por organizaciones basadas en la India. El reporte noticiero del 25 de enero decía que el “Movimiento de Levantamiento del Pueblo Tibetano” fue establecido el 4 de enero para enfocarse en los Juegos Olímpicos de Beijing de 2008. La fecha para empezar el “levantamiento” iba a ser el 10 de marzo.

Cuando fue emitido el llamado, el embajador estadounidense para la India David Mulford, se estaba reuniendo con el Dalai Lama en Dharamsala en India. La Subsecretaria de Estado Paula Dobriansky hizo una visita similar a Dharamsala

en noviembre pasado. Dobriansky es también miembra del Proyecto para un Nuevo Siglo Americano, una organización neoconservadora. Ella también ha estado involucrada en las llamadas revoluciones de colores en Europa del Este.

Phayul.com reporta que el informe del grupo del “Levantamiento” tibetano dice que está actuando “en el espíritu del Levantamiento de 1959”.

El levantamiento de 1959

El saber más sobre el “levantamiento” del 1959 nos podría ayudar a comprender mejor los acontecimientos de hoy en día en el Tíbet.

En 2002 un libro titulado “La guerra secreta de la CIA en el Tíbet” fue publicado por la Prensa de la Universidad de Kansas. Los dos autores — Kenneth Conboy de la Fundación Heritage, y James Morrison, un entrenador veterano del ejército estadounidense para la CIA — describen orgullosamente cómo la CIA organizó y encabezó el llamado movimiento de resistencia del Tíbet. El mismo Dalai Lama estaba en la nómina de pagos de la CIA y aprobó los planes de la CIA para el levantamiento armado.

La CIA puso al hermano del Dalai Lama, Gyalo Thodup, a cargo del sangriento ataque armado de 1959. Un ejército contrarrevolucionario fue entrenado por la CIA en el estado de Colorado y luego desplegado en el Tíbet por medio de aviones de la Fuerza Aérea de los Estados Unidos.

El ataque de 1959 fue un intento de golpe de estado planeado y organizado por la CIA, al igual que la invasión más tarde de Bahía de Cochinos contra Cuba socialista. El propósito era el de derrocar al gobierno tibetano de entonces y debilitar la Revolución China mientras que unía al pueblo tibetano a los intereses imperialistas estadounidenses. ¿Qué dice eso sobre el corriente levantamiento de marzo que está hecho en el mismo espíritu? □

Audiencias de Soldad@ Invernal

Las tropas confirman crímenes de guerra por EEUU

Por Michael Kramer
Silver Spring, Md.

Cientos de veteran@s militares de la susodicha guerra de la administración de Bush contra el terrorismo asistieron a las audiencias de l@s Soldad@s del Invierno del 2008 sostenidas del 13 al 16 de marzo aquí en el Colegio Nacional del Trabajo, afiliado a la AFL-CIO que está cerca de Washington. El evento de cuatro días de duración fue organizado por los Veteranos de Irak en Contra de la Guerra, (VICG).

La mayoría de l@s veteran@s había tomado parte en las ocupaciones de Irak y/o Afganistán—much@s de ell@s yendo en múltiples turnos de despliegue que duraban hasta 15 meses cada uno. Algun@s de ell@s todavía están activ@s.

Ell@s describieron las palizas sistemáticas, los encarcelamientos, las torturas, las humillaciones y los asesinatos de civiles por las fuerzas estadounidenses. Y explicaron que no era solamente el trabajo

de algunos dementes, sino que formaba parte de las operaciones militares estándar, especialmente cuando la oposición del pueblo en contra de la ocupación de su país se hizo más obvia.

Much@s de ell@s quedaron destruid@s por las memorias traumáticas y el arrepentimiento por haber participado en tales actos.

Las audiencias fueron conducidas en el formato de paneles de testigos teniendo como algunos de los temas las Reglas de Enfrentamiento; Los Robos por las Corporaciones y los Contratistas Militares; Dividir para Conquistar; El Género y la Sexualidad en el Ejército; el Racismo y la Guerra: La Deshumanización del Enemigo.

Además de l@s panelistas, la brutalidad diaria de la ocupación fue documentada por más de otr@s 100 veteran@s, quienes presentaron declaraciones detalladas sobre sus experiencias.

En el primer día de la audiencia en el

panel de las Reglas de Enfrentamiento, RdE, Adam Kokesh, veterano de la guerra de Irak, y quien estuvo en Faluya por un año comenzando en febrero del 2004, dijo que sus comandantes “cambiaban las RdE más frecuentemente de lo que nos cambiábamos la ropa interior” Estas RdE son las reglas que determinan cuándo un soldado puede usar fuerza mortal. “Hubo un momento en que impusimos toque de queda y recibimos órdenes de disparar a todo lo que se moviera en la oscuridad. Yo no creo que los soldados deben ser obligados a escoger entre su creencia moral y su instinto por sobrevivir”.

Steve Casey, quien pasó un año en Irak comenzando a mediados del 2003, poco después de la invasión estadounidense que supuestamente “liberaría” al pueblo iraquí, dijo: “Yo vi a soldados disparando a los radiadores y ventanas de los vehículos que se acercaban. Aquellos que no dieron la vuelta, desafortunadamente fueron neutralizados de una forma u otra—

más de 20 veces vi esto personalmente”. Jason Hurd estuvo en Bagdad por un año, comenzando en el 2004. El relató que luego de que su unidad recibiera disparos perdidos por una lucha cercana: “Nosotros disparamos indiscriminadamente a este edificio. Cosas como estas pasan todos los días en Irak. Reaccionamos por el miedo de perder nuestras vidas, y reaccionamos con destrucción total”.

Hurd habló sobre cómo la actitud hacia los civiles iraquíes empeoró al continuar la ocupación. “Al paso del tiempo, cuando lo absurdo de la guerra se hacía obvio, individuos de mi unidad disparaban indiscriminadamente a los vehículos que transitaban por el lado equivocado de la calle. Soldados en mi unidad luego se jactaban de esto. Yo recuerdo pensar cuán disgustado me sentía de que nos riéramos de esto, pero esta era la realidad”.

Jason Wayne Lemieux, un infante de marina, sirvió tres turnos en Irak.

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